

Speech of Hon. William A. Newell, delivered at Freehold. N. J. on Tuesday, September 18, 1866 before the District Convention, in acceptance of his renomination to Congress.

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In what manner, my friends, shall I give utterance to my gratitude for this renewed testimonial of your kindness and confidence. It can only find expression in the simple words, I thank you: words so brief, yet so comprehensive when they spring from the fullness of the heart. Twenty years have gone by since, almost friendless and unknown, I stood before you upon a similar occasion, and within that period what changes have we witnessed. The once familiar faces of Polhemus and Mairs, and Wardell, and Horner, and Cowdrick, and Irick, and Richards, and, alas, that we must add Gummere, no longer appear in our midst; their places are supplied by their sons and other youth of that day, and I am here to find myself a connecting link between two generations of public men. But I am before you for the last time to accept your proffered honor, and to solicit your support. I desire no greater distinction than to be the Representative of this district whose good people have loaded me with honors, and borne, so patiently, with my short-comings. Language cannot express my appreciation of your kindness, and the only return I can make is, to increase my efforts to serve you, and to promote the public welfare.

When we were last assembled in convention, the red hand of rebellion had deluged the land with blood, filled it with lamentations, and well nigh destroyed the national life. In the providence of God, victory came to our arms, bringing with it the emancipation of an enslaved and degraded race. But in the hour of our triumph, in the midst of our rejoicings, treason consummated the last act of its murderous mission, and the stealthy hand of the assassin added the Chief Executive of the nation to the long list of the slain.

And now has arisen the question, how shall these treasonable and rebellious people, who have sought to disrupt this Government from its very foundations, to repress freedom and to establish forever the enslavement of a race of mankind, be restored to the rights and privileges which they so readily relinquished. Arrogant and defiant as of old, unconscious of guilt, and unrepentant of their crimes, encouraged by all who sympathised in their rebellion, they demand immediate and unconditional restoration to a full participation in the national interests. Oblivious to the fact that, in violation of their oaths to support the Government, their Senators and Representatives, bidding a pomp o? and disdainful adieu to all further "mudsill" contamination, voluntarily abandoned their seats to inaugurate a rebellion, to form a government upon a principle abhorrent to humanity, they

complain that Congress does not accord to them the fullest opportunity to resume relations and obligations which they ever affected to despise, and which, through four years of bloody war, they sought to destroy and to evade.

On the other hand the royal people of the country, speaking through their Representatives in Congress, require that each rebel State shall adopt the Constitutional Amendment now before us as a condition to its restoration, and every loyal heart is rejoiced that one erring sister, one "that was lost and is found," has sanctioned it, is feasted at the family board, and again holds full representation in the National Councils, *by act of Congress officially approved by the President.*

The fathers in forming this Government, never dreaming that there could be born men so base as to plot for its overthrow—did not anticipate its present lamentable condition, and made no provision for the adjustment of difficulties growing out of rebellion. We are therefore compelled to seek a solution of the question, "has Congress or the President control over the question of the restoration of the insurgent States," in the general nature of our Government, and in such provisions of the Constitution as may be properly interpreted to have at least a general bearing thereon. That to impose terms is not regarded, either by the Administration or the revolted States, as improper or unconstitutional, there is ample evidence in the fact that the President has already, during a recess of Congress, dictated terms, which, with the exception of electing loyal men for Senators and Representatives, it is understood have been accepted, as well as in his official sanction to the action of Congress admitting Tennessee. That this power is lodged with Congress and not elsewhere, does not admit of a doubt. The war of the Revolution grew out of the undue exercise of the one-man power, and the encroachments of the Crown upon the liberties of the people, which led to the formation of a government in which *the people* are acknowledged to be the very source and fountain of power. They cannot conveniently assemble to make laws, and so their powers are delegated to Representatives. The preamble to the Constitution is inspired by this idea when it declares that "*we the people* of the United States, in order to insure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare, do ordain," &c. The very first article of the constitution relates to the construction of Congress and defines its extensive powers and duties, among which are "to declare war," "to raise and support armies," and by fair inference, to control all matters arising therefrom, "to admit new States," and certainly to adjust all kindred questions, and "to provide for the common defence and general welfare." The power of the President is Executive, is clearly defined, and limited to a remarkable degree. With other duties, the Constitution requires that "he shall, from time to time, give Congress *information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration* such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient."

Clear, therefore, as to its jurisdiction over the whole subject of restoration by these provisions, as well as by virtue of the inherent and necessary right of the people, through their representatives, to adjudicate all questions over which the lodgment of power may seem to be indefinite and doubtful, this much maligned but faithful Congress determined to guard the Government against the machinations of evil men, against repudiation, to ensure equal civil rights, and equal representation to all; and to perfect the work unfinished by the Fathers when they sought to “secure for themselves and their posterity the blessings of liberty,” presents these conditions as the result of conscientious convictions of duty and a most deliberate and unprejudiced judgment.

These measures are so moderate, so wise, so manifestly necessary in the changed condition of our national affairs that, surely, if understood, they cannot fail to receive the sanction and support of all reflecting and patriotic people.

The amendment requires, 1st. That all persons born, or naturalized, in the United States shall be citizens thereof, and shall have equal protection under the laws of the State where they reside.

2d. That representation shall be equal; that slavery be abolished, the late slave States shall not have the advantage over the free States in the twenty-three votes in Congress, and in the electoral college, as would be enjoyed without the amendment, and based upon nonentity—a dead institution. This provision virtually bases representation on suffrage, and applies alike to the loyal and the disloyal States. It equalizes representation, that high prerogative of freemen, equalizes power, makes a voter in the North equal to a voter in the South, man for man, does not recognize a three-fifth fragment of a man but a whole man, or none, as each State in its sovereign capacity may elect. It engrafts upon the organic law that which slavery excluded, and excludes that which slavery engrafted.

3d. That certain persons who have held high official position in the Federal and State Governments, have violated their oaths and had engaged in the rebellion, shall be ineligible to office until their disability is removed by a vote of two-thirds of each House of Congress.

4th. That the public debt shall be inviolate, the rebel debt illegal and void, and that no compensation shall ever be made for slaves lost by emancipation.

This, gentlemen, is in full the sum of the Congressional requirement, and one searches in vain for a single point to warrant the false, and cunningly devised charge of radicalism. There appears no infringement upon the much prized Southern dignity and honor; no absorption of State by Federal powers; no dictation of negro suffrage—a question plainly referred to the people of each State, where it rightfully belongs; no confiscation of rebel property; no territorial subjugation; no hanging for treason, indeed, treason not so much as declared to be odious; no demand for the restitution

of government property plundered from navy yards, custom-houses, mints, and sub-treasuries; no reminder of impious insults to the "Stars and Stripes," that sacred emblem of our nationality; no revenge for the atrocious assault upon the rights, and will, and majesty of the people, and the dignity and perpetuity of their government, in the assassination of the chief magistrate; no retaliation for the fate of Union exiles, the gory massacre of surrendered soldiers, the mutilations of countless maimed and mangled heroes, and the slaughtered of four hundred thousand braves; no retribution for the heinous crime of their attempts to burn our towns, poison our streams and scatter the pestilence; no atonement for spilling the blood and stilling the pulsations of that sorrowful and compassionate heart which ever beat "with charity to all and malice towards none;" no avengement of the appalling barbarity practiced in rebel prisons—those horrid dens of filth and famine, where fleads in human form, with no spark of the compassion that moved the very dogs to lick the sores of Lazarus, delighted in devising tortures for the famished skeletons of their victims, who oftentimes with festering wounds and fevered brain were left to blotch and blister in the scorching rays of a Southern sun until madness and death happily came to their relief; no single drop of the bitterness that would have brimmed the cup presented to our lips were we the vanquished and they the victors, but a spirit of forgiveness and an enlarged magnanimity pervade these offerings of peace, for a parallel to which in vain will search be made throughout the whole history of wars. The world wonders that they are not accepted. Certain it is they would be but for warrantable encouragement to refuse; and certain it is they will be when their acceptance is made inevitable. Accepted, and with truly loyal men to represent them, joyfully will we bind up the broken heart, and leave the dead to bury their dead.

Upon this broad, and safe, and sure foundation, upon the rock of eternal truth and justice, the Union Republican party plants its standard, accepts the issue of battle, and girds itself for the conflict. Our elected leader is no more, but the grand army, undismayed and invincible, moves steadily and triumphantly onward. It will be a contest for the final supremacy of principle, of class privileges over equal rights; of property in man over the right of man to the fruits of his labor; of obedience to government over treason and rebellion; of a stable government over riot, anarchy and bloodshed. The struggle will be terrible but it will be final, and the result cannot be doubtful. God will be with the right, victory will hover over the standard of freedom, mankind will be uplifted and rejoice, and never since the Birth of Bethlehem will oppressed humanity have had such occasion to rejoice.

SPEECH OF HON. WILLIAM A. NEWELL, *Delivered before the Monmouth County Convention, at Freehold, Oct. 11, 1866.*

Dr. Newell being called upon, made the following remarks:

Gentlemen —I desire to make brief explanations upon a few points, in order that I may not occupy a false position before my constituents.

Surprise has been expressed that I should have supported Johnson's policy. I never coincided with his views, either by word or vote. There exists an impression that I sustained one of his vetoes. The official record will prove this untrue. I never believed that he had any right to assume the adjustment of pending difficulties, and have fully explained that the power over this whole question was vested in Congress. His course during the war, at his inauguration as President—not as Vice President—his annual message, and his interviews with delegations gave Republicans confidence in him, and ensured their support. I was induced, by his assurances that he did not design abandoning the Union party and Union principles, to adhere to him hoping to prevent a final rupture, to preserve the integrity of the party, and to secure his co-operation with Congress, in order to hasten the restoration of the Union; but when he turns his back upon his friends and takes counsel of his enemies; when he manifests sympathy with secessionists, and denounces as disunionists the loyal men of the country, when he proclaims that the Congress of the people is an irresponsible body hanging upon the verge of the Government; when he declares that the next rebellion to be put down will be at the North; when he displaces from office tried and trusty friends of the Government, and fills their places with men whose maledictions against him still ring in our ears, whose sympathies were with the rebellion, and who formally declared the war to be a failure; when he arrogates a power which belongs only to the people; when he would admit to a control of the Government men whose hands are reeking in the blood of patriots; when he proves false to the party which elected him and to the principles they maintain, I repudiate him and all his works; no circumstances can arise which will ever induce me to give him my confidence or support. No better evidence is needed that he understands my position than the fact that the official patronage of this District has been formally transferred to my opponent, to accomplish my defeat, either by seducing Republicans from my support—an experiment as yet attended with indifferent success—or to be given to Democrats, as they can best bargain. This latter is the rule to defeat my election, and to ensure Democratic support for Johnson as a candidate for the Presidency.

They have initiated this policy in my own town, where a man of tried loyalty and an excellent and popular officer has been made to give way to the man who held the post office under the administrations of Pierce and Buchanan. The most acceptable and able Assessor of the District, well versed in the duties of the office, and his assistants, have been displaced. Crippled soldiers have been put out to make place for greedy aspirants. The work goes on, and I will follow when they can muster courage to strike. One might criticise the nicety of the honor which permits these hungry cormorants to appropriate to themselves the proceeds of the labor of others, and the assurance which impels them to seek Republican support for their candidate whilst they are

engaged in robbing us of our rights by relentless and vindictive proscription, and persistent and unscrupulous misrepresentation, but their taste is not fastidious. Let them be warned that their glory is evanescent, their tenure brief.

Much has been said in reference to my vote increasing the pay of members of Congress, that require explanation. No man studies public economy more than myself, and I hold it to be wrong to increase unnecessarily the expenses of an already overburdened Government. I voted twice or three times against the increase, as the official record will show, and only gave it my support when it was so connected with the bill equalizing the Soldier's Bounty, that I could not vote against the one without voting against the other. I well knew that it was an unfortunate vote, but a sense of duty to the soldiers alone actuated me. Many sacrificed themselves for my country, and, if needs be, I preferred to risk a personal sacrifice rather than disappoint the just expectations of those gallant men. It is proper to inform you that whilst the bill increases the pay, it reduces the mileage one half. The late system was manifestly unjust. the mileage ranging from twenty dollars to twelve thousand dollars. This system equalizes the compensation to a great degree. The whole measure was adopted at the last hour of the session, and is imperfect. It shall be my earnest endeavor to arrange the system, by equalizing pay and mileage, so that the whole amount shall not exceed the sum hitherto appropriated; and this I think is the determination of many who, like myself, were obliged reluctantly to support this measure. By the late system none but wealthy men could afford to accept a seat in Congress, for it is well known that at Washington the cost of living exceeds greatly the cost elsewhere.

The liberation of Ireland is a question which has of late attracted public attention. I do not deal in cheap words, when I declare that I sympathize with all oppressed people, wherever found, and my course as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, with my affirmative vote on the modification of the Neutrality Laws, put it out of the power of my opponents to charge me with a profession of principles I do not practice. My grand father, whose anvil rang industriously for nearly fifty years within sound of the place where we stand, was, as the brief inscription upon his tablet in the Tennent Church yard denotes, a "native of Ireland." Intolerant of the tyranny of the Crown, and of the burden imposed upon labor by the aristocracy of his country, he sought refuge from oppression in this Western World, and aided, as best he might, in his humble sphere, in the achievement of its liberty and independence. I would not dishonor his memory by withholding from the land of his birth the blessings I would accord to all the children of men.

I trust, gentlemen, that we shall make every effort to render a good account of this county. Our opponents claim much strength here for their candidate, which I freely concede, for he is altogether an unexceptionable gentleman, and it will require all our exertions to counteract the many and

powerful influences which will be brought against us. If we labor diligently, I have no fear of the result. My own untiring and unceasing efforts shall be given, and I ask your coöperation for the cause of good government, of liberty and of loyalty.—Let us labor earnestly to defeat their boastful and impossible anticipations.

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